



United States  
Office of Personnel Management

# Physical Scientist Series

**GS-1301**

Human Resources Systems Service  
Office of Classification  
April 1996, HRCD-1

### **NOTE**

This standard has been converted from the original paper format to electronic format without substantive change in series coverage or grading criteria. The standard was reviewed to correct errors that may have been introduced during the conversion process. In some standards minor corrections were made such as updating references to other documents that may have become obsolete, or correcting minor typographical errors in the original standard. Any errors that remain due to conversion to electronic format should be minor and are not intended to change the meaning of the original standard. If you find an error in any document on this CD, please send a FAX to HRCD - Perfection, 202-606-4891, or send a note to HRCD - Perfection, Office of Classification, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC. Identify the document, page, and error. Thank you for bringing any errors to our attention.

If you find page references near the right hand margin of this standard they indicate the pagination of the official, printed version of this standard. For example, a notation "PAGE 2, 4/88, TS-87" would mean that (1) page two of the printed version begins here, (2) the date of issuance was 4/88, and (3) the Transmittal Sheet number was T.S.-87.

# **Physical Scientist Series**

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## **SERIES DEFINITION**

This series includes positions which involve professional work in the physical sciences when there is no other more appropriate series, that is, the positions are not elsewhere classifiable. Thus, included in this series are positions that involve (1) a combination of several physical science fields with no one predominant, or (2) a specialized field of physical science not identified with other existing series.

This is a revised definition of the series. The Physical Science Subseries, GS-1301.1 is abolished. The fly sheet for the General Physical Science Series, GS-1301, dated April 1962, is rescinded.

## **COVERAGE**

Positions included in this series require a background of knowledges, skills, and techniques gained from professional education and experience in the physical sciences. Positions may be engaged in planning, coordinating, managing, or performing scientific work in one or several functional areas.

The work performed falls primarily in one of the following categories:

- the work is multidisciplinary and requires professional competence reflecting recognized professions or academic disciplines in the physical sciences with no one predominant;
- the work is in a new or emerging field that has not been recognized in one of the established series in the physical science occupational group, or cannot be included as a speciality of such a series; or
- the work involves management or administration of a broad program requiring competence in a variety of disciplines in physical science with none predominant, so that the primary requirement is ability to manage or administer a scientific program rather than competence in a specialized scientific field or discipline.

Positions which involve work in one of the above categories in combination with work in engineering, health science, or biological field should be classified in this series when the work is primarily of a physical science nature.

Positions which involve work in a combination of fields within the physical sciences or between various physical sciences and engineering, biological or health science fields where no one field is predominant may be classified to the most appropriate series. In determining

which series is most appropriate, consideration should be given to such factors as the primary characteristics of the knowledges and abilities applied by the incumbent, the purpose of the work, lines of promotion, and career patterns.

## **EXCLUSIONS**

Excluded from this series are positions that require primarily competence in a field for which a series has been established, or which involves work which is largely typical of such a field.

Physical science occupations such as metallurgy, oceanography, astronomy and space science, and textile technology characteristically require the application of the principles and techniques of physics, chemistry, mathematics, and other scientific and technological fields. The application of such principles and techniques does not warrant classification of the positions in the General Physical Science Series.

Physical scientists are often competent in related physical science occupations and have the knowledge and ability needed to perform the work of positions typical of such related occupations. The fact that physicists may be well qualified to perform work characteristic of certain positions in the geophysics, astronomy and space science, and oceanography occupations does not warrant classifying positions typical of those occupations in the General Physical Science Series.

The intent of the occupational structure of the Physical Sciences Group is that positions should be classified in the General Physical Science Series when it is not appropriate to classify the position to a more specialized series. It is not sufficient that the position appears to involve several disciplines. In general, the interdisciplinary approach (described on pages 31 to 36 of the Introductory Material to Position-Classification Standards) should preferably be used, wherever appropriate, for mixed positions.

## **SPECIALIZATIONS AND TITLES**

In consideration of the wide variety and combination of specializations, fields, and disciplines that could be involved, specializations are not provided. However, the specialized fields should be clearly identified in the position description, and may be included in organizational or other informal titles. To the extent required, the specialized fields should be considered in selective placement and other personnel actions.

Titles are not specified for positions classified to this series. Agencies may use any appropriate title. Such titles as Physical Scientist, Supervisory Physical Scientist, or Physical Science

Administrator are suggested for use in the absence of a more appropriate specialized title.

## **GRADE-LEVEL CRITERIA**

This material does not include grade-level criteria. To provide for greater equity among professional engineering and scientific occupations, grade-evaluation guides for various functional kinds of work have been prepared for use across occupational lines. Positions of Physical Scientists engaged in such functions are to be evaluated by the below listed grade-evaluation guides:

*Research.* -- Positions engaged in performing basic and applied research should be evaluated by reference to the Research Grade-Evaluation Guide.

*Research Grants.* -- Positions engaged in reviewing, evaluating, and recommending approval of research grants and contracts should be evaluated by reference to the Research Grants Grade-Evaluation Guide.

*Development.* -- Positions engaged in development should be evaluated by reference to the Equipment Development Grade-Evaluation Guide.

*Education.* -- Positions engaged in education programs should be evaluated by reference to the Grade-Evaluation Guide for Instructor and Specialist Positions Involving Education and Training Work.

*Information Services.* -- Positions providing information for scientific, educational, or other purposes should be evaluated by the "Guide for the Classification of Positions Providing Professional-Level Library and Information Services."

*Interpretive Work.* -- Positions engaged in planning and operating interpretive programs should be evaluated by the "Guide for Evaluation of Professional Positions Engaged in Interpretive Work."

*Supervision.* -- Supervisory positions should be evaluated by reference to Part II of the Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide.

*Note:* Positions with functions covered by standards for specific physical science occupations should be evaluated by the appropriate standards.

